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ABSTRACT

The design and implementation of Great Britain's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) provides an opportunity to synthesize planning within a curriculum framework that is common to all learners aged 14-18. It can provide a focus for strategic planning in which learners come first. The process of designing curriculum entitlement starts with the local education authority curriculum policy statement within which 14-18 continuity and coherence are ensured and adequate resources are provided. This policy statement states a common curriculum framework for all 14-18 learning programs described in terms of aims, principles, procedures, and processes. Curriculum entitlement requires the provision of an appropriate core, outcomes, progression, and experience that will offer learners access, quality, and equity. (An illustration of a post-16 TVEI curriculum submitted as part of a TVEI contract is provided. A statement of aims and main elements of the program are included.) (YLB)

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This is the first bulletin in a short series which will describe some of the curriculum issues emerging from the extension of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). It is intended to offer information and advice to managers of TVEI programmes and, specifically, to provide guidance for those involved in the curriculum design and implementation of TVEI in local education authorities (LEAs), schools and colleges.

Two previous FEU publications have focused on TVEI. Supporting TVEI (September 1985) was a manual for FE colleges becoming involved in the TVEI Pilot. The Supporting TVEI Supplement (July 1987) summarised the previous document and updated it. This new bulletin series will draw on the experience of the LEAs and institutions involved in the Pilot, but will concentrate on the opportunities for those embarking on the TVEI extension.

TVEI was first introduced in 1983 and was intended to enhance the quality of technical and vocational education for 14- to 18-year-old students of all abilities. It marked the first direct intervention of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) (now the Training Agency) in schools provision, and was unusual in that the contract was between MSC and LEAs. The extension of TVEI is unique as an educational initiative in that it has the aim of being accessible to *all* students in the 14-18 age range. It is planned that all such students should be engaged in TVEI Extension by 1992.

The fundamental difference between Pilot and Extension is that the TVEI Pilot programme was confined to a small number of pupils who in some cases took additional pre-vocational options and in others received 'enhanced' learning programmes. For a variety of reasons (to be explored in a subsequent bulletin), the 'bolt-on' option method has rarely been effective, while 'enhancement' (attempting to deliver TVEI objectives through the main programme of study) is difficult to achieve.

The TVEI Extension was announced as a national programme in *Working Together* (HMSO, 1986). It has developed from the initial concept of a set of work-related and/or technological options to being an agent for change across the whole curriculum. The intention is to provide a wider and richer curriculum supporting a

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broad, balanced education for all young people. TVEI is now as much about curriculum delivery as design, and emphasises learning processes in addition to subject content. TVEI developments are also being used by LEAs as part of school/college consortia management arrangements and for authority-wide strategic planning of provision.

The origins of TVEI can be traced back to government thinking in the early 1980s, in which the need for major changes in our system of education and training were described with the aim of producing a flexible and adaptable workforce able to cope with change. In the Pilot phase, relatively large amounts of money were made available to a small number of institutions, but the impact on students was variable. For example, for some it meant access to impressive hardware, for others it meant more work experience. TVEI Extension plans have placed a greater emphasis on resourcing staff development and curriculum support for students, and this is more likely to produce long-term change. Although £900 million is available over 10 years, it will be thinly spread across all schools and colleges in all LEAs.

The context for Extension planning is one of rapid and fundamental change. The 16+ demographic downturn is dramatic in most areas and is requiring LEAs to rationalise post-16 provision. Youth unemployment is generally declining but serious skills shortages are appearing. Changes to the occupational structure are producing a need for multi-skilling, and there is an increasing pressure to respond to employment and community needs. Society itself is changing rapidly, and the education service must support young people in coping with change. FEU has commented on this in *Relevance, Flexibility and Competence* (1987).

LEA officers are engaged in strategic planning of post-14 provision as a result of the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act. This planning is taking place alongside work-related further education planning, GCSE developments, the implementation of the National Curriculum and the revision of the system of vocational qualifications through the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). There are tensions between some of these developments, and

managing the turbulence is no easy task; it is, however, more effective when practitioners at a variety of levels are involved and feel some 'ownership' of the plan. The design and implementation of the TVEI Extension provides an opportunity to synthesise planning within a curriculum framework which is common to all learners aged 14-18, and can provide a focus for strategic planning in which learners come first.

Continuity

From the outset, TVEI has required schools and colleges to work together, and LEAs to ensure continuity of provision and progression across the 16+ divide. Co-operation between schools and colleges on curriculum matters and servicing the same client group as equal partners is a recent development. TVEI has focused attention on the issue of continuity and LEAs have had to respond by developing new patterns of curriculum planning, staff training and management.

Curriculum continuity can be facilitated by, for example, having compatible profiling systems throughout the four-year programme and providing objective and consistent guidance and counselling. Continuity is essentially a management issue, and TVEI advice indicates that it will be the responsibility of the LEA co-ordinator to ensure school/college co-operation. For example, there should be evidence of some sharing of resources, both physical and human, and of appropriate consortium planning and institutional arrangements being made.

Coherence

TVEI guidance suggests that coherence is a key feature of planning, and that each young person's programme should be designed as an integral whole and should run smoothly from one year to the next. Coherence is, thus, a curriculum issue and needs to be addressed by programme designers at both LEA and institutional level.

For the LEA, there is a responsibility to reduce possible incompatibilities between the range of developments occurring at the same time. For the school or college, it will be important to ensure that students perceive the

range of provision to be coherent, for example by according different routes the same status. It should also be clear how the technical, vocational and general elements relate to each other at any one time across the programme (horizontally), but also throughout the four years (vertically). It is the responsibility of the LEA to manage coherence in terms of both policy and implementation.

The curriculum should be regarded as more than a set of subjects or a course; in other words, it is more than the content of a learning programme. It should also be seen more as that which is experienced by learners than that which is taught. FEU has suggested that the curriculum involves all of those planned educational processes which facilitate, or if they go wrong inhibit, learning. TVEI Extension planning is an opportunity to provide a common curriculum framework for all learners aged 14-18, within which they can pursue any appropriate academic or vocational award. TVEI curriculum criteria match FEU proposals extremely well.

Aims

FEU describes the aims and themes which should be the basis for planning all post-14 education and training as comprising:

- equal opportunity and access to provision – regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability and age;
- development of competence and progression – developing knowledge, skills and experience to facilitate progression to employment, education, training or other roles;
- role awareness and personal development – gained from an understanding of the economic, social and political environment, an appreciation of the variety of available adult roles, and a realistic appraisal of potential and prospects;
- relevance and flexibility – provided by an awareness of needs, recognition of experience and opportunity, and eliminating attitudinal, academic, physical, and other constraints.

Principles

The TVEI framework is one which provides the opportunity to emphasise a positive and supportive approach to learning by recognising proficiency, valuing

experience, and regarding academic and vocational achievement as of equal merit. To encourage this approach, LEAs and institutions should hold as fundamental principles that learners:

- are of equal value regardless of their individual strengths and weaknesses;
- have equality of access to appropriate educational provision;
- are treated equally and benefit from common learning experiences, regardless of the nature of their specific programmes;
- have equal opportunities and positive encouragement to maximise their own potential achievement.

Procedures

The curriculum is also essentially about learning processes and procedures. Certain procedures which have been suggested by FEU are now widely implemented and acknowledged to be both valuable and beneficial for learners. It is important, however, that they are implemented across the age and ability range; they are no more appropriate for one group of learners than another. These procedures are:

- learner-centredness, provided by designing programmes which allow for negotiations of content, style and targets;
- accessibility, provided by removing artificial barriers and ensuring that all learners are accommodated;
- integration, provided by making connections between the various elements of learning and combining them into a homogeneous package;
- guidance and counselling, provided within learning programmes and through the school/college infrastructure;
- personal development, provided by encouraging the development of effectiveness, role awareness and self-esteem;
- equality of opportunity and experience, provided by optimised access, equal treatment and equal regard for different outcomes.

Learners are entitled to a common curriculum framework as described above. Courses may be 'enhanced' or 'enriched' by integrating some core skills into the main areas of study, but learning entitlement also comprises outcomes, progression and experience. These elements

will, to some extent at least, be negotiated, while the aims, principles and procedures providing the framework for the curriculum should be both common and compulsory for all students in a particular area. Learners may wish to ask:

- What will I learn on this programme?
- What competence will I acquire?
- What will I be able to do after that?
- How will I be treated?

The concept of curriculum entitlement and the related issues are discussed in *Towards a Framework for Curriculum Entitlement* (FEU, 1989).

Core

An important part of the curriculum framework is a core of learning content and experiences common to all learners. FEU suggests that programme content should be considered in terms of:

- skills – performance and activity related;
- knowledge – theoretical and practical;
- experience – past and present;
- guidance – within programmes and the institutional infrastructure.

It should also be negotiated within the constraints of prevailing resources and external regulations. This leaves considerable scope for flexibility as very few awards or courses specify more than a syllabus or set of objectives. Thus, the style, pace, context and selection of activities and experiences comprising the content of a programme may all be negotiated between the teachers/tutors and students.

14–16 core

Pre-16 core content must be consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum which defines this part of the entitlement. This will mean ensuring that attainment targets are met under prescribed subject headings and understanding that the National Curriculum core is only a part of the 14–16 curriculum. Thus, it may be helpful to consider some other approaches to organising learning which are compatible with both the National Curriculum and TVEI criteria.

In *Progressing to College: A 14–16 Core* (April 1985), FEU described a core with 15 generic aims which could be used, for example, as the basis for planning cross-

curricular learning assignments. They are grouped under the following headings:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| adaptability | role transition |
| learning skills | society |
| interpersonal skills | values |
| problem solving | physical skills |
| information technology | environment |
| health education | creativity |
| science/technology | coping |
| communication/numeracy | |

This core overlaps with and complements post-16 cores, for example those of the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC).

16–18 core

The Secretary of State for Education and Science has recently suggested some core skills which all young people over the age of 16 need. These are:

- communication – written and oral;
- numeracy;
- personal relations;
- familiarity with technology;
- familiarity with systems – office and workshop procedures;
- familiarity with changing working and social contexts.

He has, significantly, also suggested that they must be integrated and not taught as 'bolt-on' extras.

This core, and others such as the CPVE core, are not packaged as subjects but rather as areas of learning. In addition to these, curriculum designers will also include in their cores some common experiences such as:

- work experience;
- residential experience;
- community experience;
- recreational experience;

and also some common learning activities such as:

- developing study skills;
- engaging in decision making;
- sharing responsibility;
- being enterprising.

Those involved in planning the 14–18 curriculum will wish to design their own cores based on some of the suggestions outlined above. A core is a useful list against which to check an individual's learning entitlement, but is only a starting-point.

Outcomes

In addition to careful consideration of programme content, students are also entitled to have unambiguous information about the potential outcomes of a particular learning programme. While some of the outcomes will be pre-specified, for example as part of the published objectives of a national award, others may be negotiated in response to individual needs. An important outcome for all programmes will be competence; FEU recommends that a broad definition is adopted which embraces vocational, academic and personal competence.

Progression

Progression within and from TVEI should also be a part of student entitlement. Progress from one course to another, possibly in a different institution, may require careful organisation by scheme managers to meet individual needs adequately. Progression opportunities at the end of the programme should be made clear at the outset. Discussion about these opportunities may form part of the guidance offered to students. The resulting agreement, including content, outcomes, interim targets, and intended destination, may be the basis of a contract between the institution and the student which will need to be periodically reviewed and supported by continuous guidance.

Experience

Curriculum entitlement must also include the right to expect a common experience while on the learning programme. This means that students should receive equal and equitable treatment regardless of their individual needs and particular courses of study. In this respect, equality of opportunity means more than equal access; there is a need for positive encouragement for all learners to develop their own potential achievement, and for their learning outcomes, regardless of level, to be equally valued.

Access, quality and equity

This curriculum entitlement, comprising content, outcomes, progression and experience, may be described in the form of a learning contract between the LEA/institution and the student, and could form the basis of continuous reviews and revision of interim targets. To ensure its delivery, a system of learner advocacy should

be developed which could include LEA monitoring, the involvement of an external agency, and/or students taking responsibility for their own learning supported by a system of guidance.

The process of designing curriculum entitlement:

starts with the **LEA curriculum policy statement** within which 14-18 **continuity and coherence** is assured and adequate **resources** are provided, and states:

a **common curriculum framework** for all 14-18 learning programmes described in terms of:

aims, principles, procedures and processes which require:

the provision of an appropriate **core, outcomes, progression and experience**, which, together, will offer learners:

access, quality and equity, which is the basis of:

ENTITLEMENT.

Information

This bulletin has focused on the theme of curriculum entitlement as one which should underpin the design and implementation of TVEI programmes. In addition to the common curriculum framework described here, the concept of a student entitlement has implications for curriculum planners in relation to assessment and accreditation, the organisation of learning through coherent and integrated programmes, the identification of (and provision for) individual needs, equality of opportunity and experience, adequate LEA and institutional organisation and support, and programme quality assurance through monitoring and evaluation. These and other themes will be the basis of future bulletins in this series.

Further information about FEU work on TVEI and also in relation to curriculum entitlement may be obtained from Stuart McCoy, FEU, 2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE (tel. 01-321 0433 ext. 271). General enquiries and requests for additional copies of this bulletin should be addressed to the FEU Information Centre (ext. 256).

Information about TVEI may be obtained from the TVEI Unit, 236 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8HL.

FEU staff are undertaking research concerning TVEI and would be interested to hear from TVEI managers and practitioners with examples of interesting practice.

Designing the TVEI curriculum post-16: a case study

One LEA has taken the opportunity offered by TVEI Extension to emphasise the concept of a core curriculum for all students in full-time education and training as a prerequisite for a broad and balanced learning programme which can provide realistic progression and prepare them for adult and working life. LEAs must produce a post-16 submission as part of the TVEI contract; the following illustration is an extract. It begins with a statement of aims from which a core of learning areas are derived, and then outlines the main elements of the programme.

Aims of the post-16 curriculum:

- to develop an informed view of possible employment opportunities and produce a realistic career plan;
- to improve skills in the area of numeracy and communication and equip students with those study and learning skills necessary for progression;
- to enhance personal competence, particularly in the areas of enterprise, personal autonomy, flexibility and team work, so that students are encouraged to form satisfying personal and working relations;
- to develop competence in the application of information technology to a range of study and work situations, and appreciation of the implications of IT for society and the individual;
- to develop a student's competence and awareness in the areas of science and technology;
- to develop a student's knowledge of modern industry and society;
- to develop an interest and involvement in recreational and cultural pursuits;
- to develop critical evaluation of personal values and an appreciation of the multicultural nature of society;
- to improve a student's understanding of European culture and, where possible, competence in the use of foreign languages;
- to provide opportunities for the development of vocationally related skills.

From these aims are derived the following core areas which are the basis of post-16 curriculum entitlement.

Curriculum aim	Core area
1	Career guidance
2	Numeracy/communication/study skills
3	Team work/enterprise
4	IT/data processing
5	Scientific/technological awareness
6	Industrial awareness and economic/political literacy
7	Leisure/recreational pursuits and aesthetic/creative activities
8	Personal and social education
9	European studies/language skills
10	Vocational skills

It is intended that each of these core elements should be present in the learning programmes of all students.

There are also some essential enhancing elements of learning programmes which must be included. In the past a student's curriculum has been largely determined by which main course they followed. Our proposals necessitate a wider view, with the core areas providing the foundation on which the curriculum is built. These will be delivered through all aspects of a student's learning programme. All TVEI students will be expected to follow a learning programme which consists of the following elements:

- main externally accredited courses;
- vocational studies;
- supportive studies;
- tutorial and guidance systems;
- leisure and recreational activities;
- systems of profiling leading to a Record of Achievement.

The core curriculum will be delivered through each of these interlocking elements. The concept of a learning programme built on common aims, a core curriculum entitlement and a framework of essential elements provides a basis for coherence and a model through which enhancement can be effected.

FE colleges, as a part of the 16-18 submission to the TVEI Unit, must submit a plan for implementing the TVEI curriculum.

The college response to involvement in TVEI Extension in this authority has been positive. The college is committed to a major institutional review in order to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness involving a new approach to increased participation and achievement post-16. College management has set the following objectives:

- to plan and implement a five-year plan for the radical development of the college as a learning centre;
- to plan and implement an admissions service for young people;
- to plan and introduce a range of student support services, including counselling, study centres, careers centres and work placement units;
- to plan, introduce and evaluate a universally available core curriculum framework which includes continuing experience and achievement in communication, mathematics, information technology and science;
- to plan and introduce individual learning programmes for all major vocational routes, based on learning centres;
- to plan, introduce and evaluate assessment on demand for the core, individual and open learning programmes, and a selection of vocational competences;
- to design and introduce a summative assessment and certification service which embraces the range of current qualifications on offer, and those which emerge through NCVQ and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC);
- to plan and introduce an exit and transfer service for young people;
- to develop the college's marketing practices to include family and weekend learning, summer schools, and assessment and placement services for employers.

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